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# GRIST TO THE MILL.

A Comic Drama,

IN TWO ACTS.

BY

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AUTHOR OF THE

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Bad Judge,” “ The Jenkinsons,” “ The Mysterious Lady,”  
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## GRIST TO THE MILL.

*First Performed at the Theatre Royal Haymarket,  
on Thursday, February 22nd, 1844.*

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### Characters.

THE PRINCE DE CONTI	. . .	Mr. H. HOLL.
THIERRY DUMONT	. . .	Mr. HOWE.
THE MARQUIS DE RICHEVILLE	. . .	Mr. CHARLES MATHEWS.
MONSIEUR DE MERLUCHET	( <i>Vidame de Poitiers</i> )	Mr. STRICKLAND
MADAMOISELLE de MERLUCHET	. . .	Mrs. W. CLIFFORD.
FRANCINE	. . .	Madame VESTRIS.

---

### Costumes.

- PRINCE.—Rich suit of the period—hat.
- THIERRY.—Handsome white gold laced coat, red waistcoat, sword, and military hat.
- MARQUIS.—Plain and worn suit of the time.—*2nd dress*, handsome velvet suit.
- DE MERLUCHET.—Grey suit, with gold lace.
- MADAMOISELLE.—Figured silk double dress—high cap—high heel'd shoes, fan, powder.
- FRANCINE.—Neat provincial dress.—*2nd dress*, crimson velvet riding coat, and gloves—green satin petticoat, hat and feathers.

This little comedy is founded upon a One Act Vandeville, entitled  
" *La Marquise de Carabas.*"

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GRIST TO THE MILL.

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ACT FIRST.

SCENE I.—*Exterior of a Picturesque Mill and Miller's House, with a window to open L.—In the distance, an Old Castle, on a rocky eminence; and in the Valley the roof and chimney of a large Ancient Mansion appear over the Trees of a large Park.*

*Enter FRANCINE and THIERRY from House, U.E.L.*

THIER. My dear Francine, I tell you my uncle will turn me out again, as he has done so often before.

FRANC. Never mind—how many times will that make?

THIER. Seven.

FRANC. Well, surely then, you must be so used to it that it can't signify.

THIER. But what good can come of it? It will only irritate him—make him more inveterate against me.

FRANC. Try once more. It is, surely worth the trouble. Rich as he is—and you his own sister's son.

THIER. That's my offence, or rather my mother's offence, which he visits upon my head. He has never forgiven her for marrying beneath her rank.

FRANC. She married a good—a handsome man—and a man who would have made a much better marquis than he does.

THIER. Perhaps so; but he was a brewer, and had a brother a miller:

FRANC. Who was my father—bless his old soul; as honest a man as ever breathed: so honest that he died as poor as a church mouse;—for though he ground corn, he didn't grind hearts, as your miserly uncle, the marquis, does. Look at the chimneys of that fine old mansion, rising over the trees of the great park yonder; why

there's more smoke comes from the humble one of my poor cottage here than from his fifty. And to think that he has got ten or a dozen such fine houses in different parts of the kingdom, all tumbling to ruins for want of proper establishments to keep them up. Oh, if I only knew a way to punish him.

THIER. You cannot do it more effectually than by proclaiming your family connections.

FRANC. And be turned out of this mill, which is on his estate—no thank you, cousin, I'll find some trick worth two of that, or it would scarcely have been worth my while to leave the mill my father worked, and the friends who loved me for his sake, and take this deserted old one in a neighbourhood where I am a perfect stranger.

THIER. Oh, dear Francine, it is for my sake you have done that; and it adds to my vexation, because I see no chance of being ever able to repay you for all your kindness.

FRANC. Fiddle faddle, "repay." I am indebted to your mother for an education far better than my poor father could have afforded to give me, and I shall be sufficiently repaid if I see you happily married, and restored to your proper position, as the nephew of the Marquis de Richeville. Instead of making you starve upon the paltry pay of a Cornet of Cavalry, let him buy you a regiment, and allow you, besides, an income suitable to your rank—if he won't make you his heir, as he ought to do.

THIER. Oh, if he would only buy me the regiment.

FRANC. He never will, if you don't ask him.

THIER. Ask him—I might as well ask for the moon.

FRANC. Never mind, go and try; you have not seen him these two years. Tell him exactly how you are situated—that you are in love with a young lady of good family—that her friends will not consent to her marrying a poor Cornet; and that before you run away with her, which as a matter of course you will do, you thought it your duty to come to ask his advice on the subject.

THIER. Well, I am bound to take yours, and so I will; but I know the consequences—Eh! who is this coming up the hill? not my uncle, surely!

FRANC. Oh, no, it's an old coxcoub, a Monsieur de

MERLUCHET. Don't let him suspect you know me ; I'll in and lock the door. If he asks you any questions, you've seen nobody, mind ; you're a stranger in these parts ; you've knocked—to ask your way—and there's nobody at home. *[Exit into house, U.E.L.]*

THIER. Merluchet !—I should know that name. There was an old Captain of Musqueteers I used to meet at Versailles—

*Enter MONSIEUR DE MERLUCHET, R.*

MERLU. Phew ! Confound the hill ; I shan't have breath for a tender speech these ten minutes. Nothing less bright than the eyes of Francine would have dragged me up this horrid precipice a second time. Pshaw ! a stranger here—a young gentleman, too. Humph ! Madame Francine, is this a rival I wonder.

THIER. *(aside)* 'Tis he ; but if he dosen't recollect *me*, I shall certainly not—

MERLU. Why, as I live, it's the young Cornet. What the deuce is his name ?—Dumont, to be sure ; my friend at Versailles. Why, Cornet !

THIER. He docs recollect me ; there's no help for it. *(aloud)* Can it be possible ! Captain de Merluchét, of the Grey Musqueteers !

MERLU. Ex-Captain of Musqueteers, by the injustice of the Minister of War, who insisted on it I was fifty-eight. “Thirty-eight,” I kept telling him ; “ask the ladies.”

THIER. Ha, ha ! and did he ?

MERLU. He did, and the ungrateful creatures replied, “sixty, at least.” A cabal, a cabal, my dear fellow ; jealousy at the bottom of it all ; and I am pensioned off in the prime of my life. But what in the name of wonder has brought you into these parts ? You have not quitted your regiment.

THIER. Only on leave, for a few weeks, to see a relation.

MERLU. Ah, you have relations in this neighbourhood, have you ; so have I, fortunately, or I should have been poorly off ; on being sent to the right-about I suddenly remembered that I had a cousin, Mademoiselle de Merluchét, a fair virgin of fifty, who had a castle in Poitou. There it is, Sir, a fine old feudal crow's nest, perched upon

hat rock yonder. She received me with open arms, and through her influence I was appointed a secular officer to the Bishop. I have the honour to be the Vidame de Poitiers.

THIER. Your most humble servant, Monsieur le Vidame, You have fallen upon your legs, it seems; a wealthy maiden cousin, who takes such interest!—

MERLU. No, not wealthy; hang it, I wish she had been, for in that case I'd have married her; but no matter. It may turn out better after all, for, to let you into a secret, in less than a week, her marriage with another may make a rich man of me, without the encumbrance of a wife of fifty.

THIER. Indeed! her marriage with another!

MERLU. In less than a week, with my management, she will be Marchioness de Richeville.

THIER. Marchioness de Richeville! (*aside*) The devil! Marry my uncle! So, so!

MERLU. Do you know the Marquis?

THIER. I—yes—that is—I've heard of him. (*aside*) How lucky he does not suspect; let me endeavour to ascertain.

MERLU. Enormously rich; owns all the property hereabouts for leagues.

THIER. And you say that, with your management—

MERLU. Entirely; one of the cleverest things that even I ever did, and you know my talent in that line. The fact is, that my cousin having passed half-a-century in single blessedness, was ready to jump at a husband of any sort and the arrival of such a man as I am completely turned her head; before I'd been in the castle a week she offered me her noble hand; in my situation there was no escape—

THIER. Escape!

MERLU. I mean—I—I couldn't hesitate; I accepted it with all the transport I was capable of expressing, a four-and-twenty hours would have seen me lord of the crazy old castle of Merluchet and of its almost as dilapidated mistress, when by the luckiest accident—but may I trust you?

THIER. Monsieur le Vidame!

MERLU. A thousand pardons; a brother soldier, an old Versailles acquaintance—I need not have asked the question. Well, fancy the Marquis induced to conceal himself in the dressing-room of Mademoiselle Merluchét!

THIER. The Marquis!—for what purpose?

MERLU. Never mind, there he was; of course I took care that my cousin should discover him, scream in the right key at the proper moment, and that I should enter with servants and torches just as she fainted in the arms of the Marquis, exactly as you have seen it done twenty times at the Opera.

THIER. And what did the Marquis do?

MERLU. Most ungallantly let the lady drop flat on the floor, and tried himself to jump out of the window; but I held him fast and insisted on his making the only reparation in his power for compromising the honour of an ancient lady—family I mean, and taking advantage of the too susceptible heart of an innocent virgin of fifty. Ha, ha, ha! You don't laugh.

THIER. Oh, yes, I do—ha, ha! A capital trick! And he consented?

MERLU. Not at the moment; swore, protested, fumed, blustered, and actually departed vowing that he would sacrifice his whole fortune sooner than comply with my demand. But he's cooled upon that; would marry a Medusa sooner than part with a louis-d'or. We have him, safe; my cousin will be his wife and his heiress, I shall be heir to my cousin.

THIER. You—but the Marquis has relations of his own. I have surely heard of a nephew.

MERLU. Nephew! Phoo! I know who you mean—there's a vulgar lout somewhere I believe—the son of a sister who disgraced herself, by running away with a low tradesman—a brewer—or baker—or butcher—or something of that sort. But bless your soul, the Marquis won't acknowledge him—would see him hanged before he'd leave him the value of a brass button. No, no, that cub counts for nothing.

THIER. (*aside*) Cub! I've a great mind to break every bone in the old rascal's body—but prudence. (*aloud*) You make sure of the match then—

MERLU. Certain! If he flies off, we appeal to the Prince de Conti.

THIER. The Prince de Conti!

MERLU. Yes; his Highness is at this moment making

a tour of the Province, expressly commissioned by his Majesty and Cardinal de Fleury, to enquire into all grievances, and particularly to see justice done in cases affecting morality—rather an extraordinary mission for his Highness, I confess, whose morality is the least conspicuous of his numberless virtues—but such are generally the most rigid censors; and, as secular officer of the Bishop, it will be my painful duty to bring this matter before him.

THIER. 'Sdeath! this looks serious—I must consult Francine before I see my uncle. (*aside*)

MERLU. And now my young scapegrace, as I have set the example of confidence; where are you bound, for and what's your business in this neighbourhood? simply to see your relations; or, is there a petticoat in the case—eh? I know your tricks, Cornet, you can't deceive me.

THIER. Upon my honour, no; simply to see my relations.

MERLU. And where do they reside? Do I now anything of them?

THIER. Not likely—quiet people—some leagues from hence.

MERLU. Then what the deuce are you doing on this hill, Sir, so far out of the high road?

THIER. Strolled out for the sake of the prospect, whilst my horse was being shod in the village. They told me there was a very pretty view from the mill.

MERLU. Are you sure they didn't tell you there was a very pretty woman who owns this mill, eh?—you young libertine!

THIER. A pretty woman, indeed! It is unfortunate then that she is not at home.

MERLU. Oh, what you've ascertained that—upon my word, Sir—(*crosses*)—Humph—ah—the door's fast, and the window shut—she is out I suppose, and how came *you* to make that discovery—you didn't bring any grist to the mill, did you?

THIER. My dear Vidame, you seem to be remarkably sensitive on the subject; was it merely for the prospect that *you* strolled up the hill; or are *you* in the habit of bringing grist hither?

MERLU. Sir, as secular officer to the Bishop, it is my duty to visit——

THIER. All the pretty women in the diocese, no doubt; they are included in the temporalities over which you possess jurisdiction. Farewell, my good friend, I wouldn't for the world interrupt you in the exercise of your important functions. My horse is shod, no doubt, by this time, and I have a long ride before dinner.

MERLU. A safe journey and a good appetite for you, my dear Cornet. Happy to see you at the Chateau de Richeville if you come this way back.

THIER. You are very kind. (*aside*) If I *do* call it may not be quite so conducive to your happiness as you imagine.

*Exit* THIERRY, l E. L.

MERLU. As Francine is not at home, I'll walk down the hill again and look in on the Marquis. I must press for his answer, or the Prince may arrive before we have a sufficient ground for complaint. Aha, my pretty miller! Let me once have the management of this estate, which, if my cousin becomes Marchioness de Richeville is a settled thing—and then lay aside your saucy airs and surrender at discretion; or out of this mill you march, double quick time, I promise you.

[*Exit* MERLUCHET, R.U.E.]

*Enter* THIERRY, l E. L.

THIER. He's gone: Francine, Francine! there's not a moment to be lost. (*FRANCINE leaves window*) If Francine cannot hit upon some plan to frustrate that old scoundrel of an Ex-Musqueteer—I'm ruined completely. (*door opens*) To council, to council! [*Exit* THIERRY *into house*.]

SCENE II.—A *Hall in the Chateau, Old and Dirty.*  
*centre doors to open.*

*Enter* DE MERLUCHET *disputing with a* SERVANT, R. l E.

MERLU. Don't tell me, sirrah! I am the Vidame de Poitiers, and I insist upon speaking to the Marquis de Richeville; announce me instantly—no words—fly, or I'll run my sword through your rascally body!

[*Exit* SERVANT *alarmed, c.*]

—Here's a condition for such a building to be in—the

grass growing in the court-yard—scarcely a chair in the house fit to sit down upon; the ceiling black with smoke, and the walls festooned with cobwebs; a few half-starved servants in threadbare liveries, and three skeletons of horses tied up to an empty manger. Such is the splendid establishment of the Marquis de Richeville. Oh, a famous reformation I'll work here, depend upon it.

*Re-enter SERVANT throwing open the c. doors.*

SERVANT. The Marquis de Richeville.

MERLU. (L.) Aha! he is coming then.

*Enter the MARQUIS, c. preceded by an old SUISSSE, carrying a halbert, and followed by an equally old PAGE, who carries a sword upon a cushion.*

MARQ. Good morning Vidame. You desired to see me.

MERLU. I was ambitious of the honour of presenting my respects to the Marquis de Richeville.

MARQ. May I enquire to what fortunate circumstance I am indebted for the pleasure of this unexpected visit? But pardon me, you have breakfasted I presume.

MERLU. I have, Marquis; but——

MARQ. I have not—will you excuse my requesting you——

MERLU. To breakfast again! Oh, Marquis.

MARQ. Oh, no—I could not think of it—simply to witness my frugal repast.

MERLU. To witness—Oh—certainly—no apologies I beg. (*aside*) The stingy curmudgeon!

MARQ. My breakfast, scoundrel! not you, Vidame.

MERLU. Oh, Marquis. (*bowing*)

SUISSSE. (*calling in a feeble voice*) The breakfast of my Lord Marquis de Richeville.

VOICE. (*in the distance, R.U.E.*) “The breakfast of my Lord Marquis de Richeville!”

*A bell rings—during this time the MARQUIS takes the sword from the cushion, and, assisted by the PAGE, puts it on. The SERVANT places a chair, R.C.*

MERLU. (*aside*) I wonder if the breakfast is worthy of

the ceremony. I shouldn't be surprised if the stingy dog takes care of himself, lean as he looks——

*Enter a MAITRE D'HOTEL, c., with a boiled egg in an eggcup, on a silver salver, a slice of bread, and a saltcellar.*

—One egg, and nothing else, as I'm a living creature!

*The SERVANT advances with a small table, R.C., the MARQUIS seats himself. The PAGE breaks the egg and presents it to the MARQUIS, whilst the MAITRE D'HOTEL cuts the slice of bread into small pieces.*

MARQ. A chair for the Vidame! (SERVANT places one, L.C., and then goes out, followed by SUISSE and MAITRE D'HOTEL, c.) and now Monsieur de Merluchét, as you will not share my humble meal——

MERLU. (*aside*) Share! an egg! He would offer me the shell, I've no doubt.

MARQ. Your business with me.

MERLU. It is strictly private, Marquis,

MARQ. Private! (*to PAGE*) Begone, rascal; not *you*, Vidame.

MERLU. Oh, Marquis. (*bowing as before*) *Exit PAGE, R.*

MARQ. And apropos of private business, are you aware that I could proceed against you for a trespass?

MERLU. A trespass! me?

MARQ. Yes, Monsieur, you; you have been poaching upon my manors.

MERLU. Upon my honour——

MARQ. Nay, nay, Vidame; one of my gamekeepers——

MERLU. Pardon me, you have but one.

MARQ. That's the man I allude to; he declares that he distinctly saw Monsieur de Merluchét stealing through the plantations at the foot of the hill yonder, one evening last week, just at dusk.

MERLU. Stop, stop, one evening last week; ha! ha! stupid ass! not *you*, Marquis; the gamekeeper.

MARQ. So I presumed.

MERLU. I was hunting, sure enough, but couldn't the fools imagine the game I was after? It was a petticoat, Marquis.

MARQ. A petticoat! Monsieur de Vidame, you! an officer of the Bishop.

MERLU. Secular! secular officer! Remember that; lay, not clerical, temporal, not spiritual; the distinction is most important. Besides, it was in fulfilment of my duty that I was endeavouring to discover the residence of a mighty pretty woman, whom I had never seen before, but who evidently lived in the neighbourhood. Faith! she led me a precious dance, but I succeeded. You know the old mill, Marquis, above the village.

MARQ. Yes, it as been deserted for some years.

MERLU. Deserted! It contains a treasure.

MARQ. (*rising hastily*) A treasure! It's mine by law the mill is on my estate, I am the lord of the soil, whatever is found on it——

MERLU. Stop, stop! The treasure I mean is the pretty woman aforesaid, a fine buxom widow; if you claim——

MARQ. (*seating himself*) By no means. Monsieur le Vidame; to the business, if you please, which brought you here.

MERLU. Apropos of a petticoat, eh, Marquis; you guess the business.

MARQ. Monsieur le Vidame!

MERLU. In one word, Marquis, when will you marry my cousin; and make the only reparation in your power to an ancient and respectable family?

MARQ. (*rising*) I decline any coversation on the subject.

MERLU. I must insist on an answer before the arrival of the Prince de Conti, as, should it not be satisfactory, it is my intention to appeal to the justice of his Royal Highness. Remember, you have promised.

MARQ. I revoke my promise, it was extorted from me; I will appeal myself to his Royal Highness.

MERLU. The proofs are manifest of your guilt.

MARQ. No such thing, it was all accident! I was out shooting with my dogs——

MERLU. Excuse me, you keep but one dog.

MARQ. Well, that's it. I was tired, Mademoiselle de Merluchét saw me from her window, seated on the stump; of a tree before the gate——

MERLU. Meditating your audacious project.

MARQ. Not at all; you were sent to ask me into the castle, to offer me some refreshment.

MERLU. Little dreaming how you would abuse such hospitality.

MARQ. Abuse a fiddlestick! I accepted, of course, stayed dinner, and played a game of picquet, not for money but ——

MERLU. No, for love, insidious man; you were playing a deeper game.

MARQ. I deny it; I took my leave at a proper hour.

MERLU. But you didn't leave the building.

MARQ. Because you whispered that you had something to say to me in private, an advantageous proposal, a loan.

MERLU. So I did, I wanted to raise a sum of money on my own security.

MARQ. You told me on church property.

MERLU. Well, I am church property, I belong to the Bishop.

MARQ. You told me to enter the third room on the right of the gallery, and wait till you came.

MERLU. I said on the left.

MARQ. On the right, I'll swear, on the right!

MERLU. My cousin's dressing-room?

MARQ. How should I know?

MERLU. Evasion! If a mistake, why did you not come out again?

MAR. Because she came in and locked the door.

MERLU. *She* locked the door, poor innocent, little imagining that a Tarquin was concealed.

MARQ. I was not concealed, she must have seen me; it was a plot, a vile plot.

MERLU. (*laying his hand upon his sword*) Marquis!

MARQ. (*doing the same*) Vidame!

MERLU. Let us be cool; your death will not repair my cousin's honour.

MARQ. There's nothing to repair but her fortune, and she wants to do it with mine; she would eat up my revenues, squander my savings, but I'll die first, I'll——  
Shouts of joy in my park! (SHOUTS *without*)

MERLU. They must think you dead already.

MARQ. (*looking out*) Horsemen in the avenue ! Grooms in the Royal livery !

MERLU. It's the Prince de Conti ! He's come ! That's he, on the bay horse ; I know him well, and he knows me too, we have often met at Versailles. Marquis, you are aware of his Royal Highness's motive in thus visiting the chateaux of the nobility in this province ; your answer, on the instant !

MARQ. Impossible ! I must hasten to receive his Royal Highness. [*Exit c. and L.*]

MERLU. And I to give notice to my cousin. We must lose no time. [*Exit R.*]

*Shouts renewed—Enter MARQUIS with the PRINCE DE CONTI, c. from L., and followed by the PAGE, who places a chair for the PRINCE, and then retires.*

MARQ. Your Royal Highness, I am overwhelmed with confusion ; I had commanded that due notice should be given me of your Royal Highness's approach, and my negligent people have suffered me to be thus taken by surprise, and prevented my receiving your Royal Highness with all the honours due to your illustrious birth.

PRINCE. No apologies, Marquis ; I am pleased it has so happened, as I have a fairer chance of forming my opinion.

MARQ. (*aside*) And so am I, for it would have cost a mint of money. Your Royal Highness is all kindness ; but I trust I shall be allowed to offer you such entertainment as my poor house affords.

PRINCE. No, Marquis ; for I shall depart again immediately. My grooms, you perceive, have not dismounted,

MARQ. I must endeavour to console myself for so great a disappointment—(*aside*)—by the reflection of how much I shall save by it.

PRINCE. (*severely*) Monsieur le Marquis de Richeville !

MARQ. Your Royal Highness !

PRINCE. You have demanded of the King the Governorship of this province, now vacant by the death of the Duke de Chatellherault.

MARQ. I venture to consider myself entitled to——

PRINCE. 'Tis well ; with the Grand Cross of the Order of St. Louis.

MARQ. And of the St. Esprit, my ancestors——

PRINCE. 'Tis well. You have also solicited from the Cardinal Minister one of the most lucrative offices in the gift of his Eminence.

MARQ. I flattered myself that in my position——

PRINCE. 'Tis well. His Majesty and the Cardinal have deputed me to ascertain how far you are worthy of such high distinction; and it will be therefore my duty to advise them——

MARQ. Oh, your Royal Highness—my gratitude——

PRINCE. To advise them not to accord one of the favours you have so earnestly solicited.

MARQ. How!

PRINCE. You seem astonished, Marquis. Do you consider that high rank and enormous wealth are, of themselves, sufficient qualifications for the exercise and enjoyment of such power and distinctions as you appear to covet? Is it likely the King would entrust one of his finest Provinces to your charge when he hears how you govern your own estates; or permit the Grand Crosse s of his noblest Order to sparkle on a coat which meanness and not poverty has worn threadbare?

MARQ. Your Royal Highness, I——

PRINCE. Is it likely, Sir, that the Cardinal de Fleury will heap wealth upon a man who does not, by his proper support of his own establishment, contribute, even indirectly, to the revenues of the kingdom?

MAR. I can assure your Royal Highness——

PRINCE. For leagues before I reached these gates, I enquired who is the owner of these woods, these lands, these villages, this hunting lodge, that mansion. The answer was always "The Marquis de Richeville." But when I asked what good has he done, what public works has he patronized, what art has he encouraged? Does he live as a nobleman of such vast wealth should do? Can you show me a single proof of his liberality, his charity, or his patriotism? All tongues were mute.

MARQ. From respect—from respect.

PRINCE. Not a lip blessed you; and though fear kept them silent, their pale cheeks and scowling brows told a sad tale of poverty and oppression. In short, Marquis, it

needed not the sight of this neglected chateau and its meagre inhabitants to confirm me in the belief that you are every way unworthy of the rank you hold, and the favour you aspire to. (*crosses to R.C.*)

MARQ. (*aside*) Oh, if I knew the villain that——

*Enter PAGE. 1 E.R., announcing.*

PAGE. The Vidame de Poitiers and Mademoiselle de Merluchét.

*Enter MERLUCHET and MADEMOISELLE, R. 1 E.*

MAD. (*kneeling to the PRINCE*) Justice, most illustrious Prince ; justice !

MAR. (L., *aside*) Oh, the sorceress !

PRINCE. (*raising MADEMOISELLE*) Rise, Madame.

MAD. *Mademoiselle !*

PRINCE. (*correcting himself*) Mademoiselle ! Your name—De ?——

MAD. De Merluchét Diana, Virginia, Penelope de Merluchét.

PRINCE. You demand justice, Mademoiselle, against whom ?

MERLU. He does not recollect me.

MAD. Permit, most illustrious Prince, my cousin, the Vidame de Poitiers, to state the facts in pity to an innocent maiden.

PRINCE. An innocent maiden ! let her approach.

MAD. Prince !

MERLU. She stands before your Royal Highness, covered with confusion.

PRINCE. Ah ! Then *you* are—of course ; there is no reason that you should not be the—a—(*aside*) 'Sdeath !—an awkward mistake. (*aloud*) A thousand pardons, Mademoiselle. Speak, Monsieur le Vidame ; of whom does your cousin complain ?

MERLU. (*aloud*) He does not recollect me. (*aloud*) I regret, your Royal Highness, to name the Marquis de Richeville.

PRINCE. Indeed ! So, Marquis, here is at last a positive accusation. In what way, Sir, has the Marquis wronged this lady ; by exaction, usury or illegal tenure ?

MERLU. Alas, Sir, by a far more grievous proceeding ; he has comprised her honour, cast a blot upon her virgin fame, and destroyed her peace for ever.

PRINCE. How, arquis ! have you Mslandered an innocent lady ?

MARQ. Never, as I live, Sir.

MERLU. Pardon me, Prince ; it is not by slander, it is by an audacious invasion of her apartments, by a scandalous eclat, and a subsequent breach of promise, that the Marquis de Richeville has stained the hitherto immaculate reputation of Mademoiselle de Merluchét.

PRINCE. Impossible !

MARQ. Quite, your Royal Highness ; the facts speak for themselves. I deny the charge altogether.

MAD. Faithless man ! cruel monster ! Vidame, support me.

MERLU. Courage, noble and much injured cousin ; his Royal Highness will see you righted.

PRINCE. (*aside*) Let me preserve my gravity, if possible. (*aloud*) You say you deny this charge ?—(*to MARQUIS*)

MARQ. Emphatically !

MERLU. Will you deny that you were discovered in the dressing-room of Mademoiselle de Merluchét ; that, alarmed by her cries, we broke open the door, which was locked, and found her clasped in your arms ?

PRINCE. Oh, Marquis ! Marquis !

MARQ. A mistake—all a mistake on my part ; and a plot to ruin me.

PRINCE. Clasped in your arms, by mistake ? For whom could you possibly mistake so—respectable a lady ? Sooner than I would have touched her, I would have thrown myself out of the window.

MARQ. So would I, if I had been left to my choice ; but she caught hold of me and screamed.

PRINCE. Enough, enough, Marquis. (*aside*) An excellent opportunity to punish this niggard and display a little virtuous indignation in the cause of morality. (*aloud*) It is evident by your own admissions that, accidentally or purposely, you have compromised the reputation of a noble maiden. As a man of honour, you cannot avoid making such reparation as the lady or her family require.

MARQ. But, Monseigneur, only look at her.

PRINCE. (*aside*) I'd rather not. (*aloud*) Marquis de Richeville, this evening the contract; or to-morrow you are sent a prisoner to the Castle of Pignerol.

MERLU. (*aside*) Victory! (*aloud*) In the name of all my family, most illustrious Prince, I beg to offer my grateful——

MARQ. A prisoner! to Pignerol! But this is tyranny, oppression, injustice of the——

PRINCE. Have a care, Marquis; you know the powers with which I am invested, the mission on which I am now sent. The interests of morality——

MARQ. But no earthly power can force me. There are reasons, there are obstacles.

MAD. What reasons?

MERLU. What obstacles?

PRINCE. Name *one*.

*Enter PAGE, c. from L., announcing "The Marchioness de Richeville."*

ALL. The Marchioness!

*Enter FRANCINE, in a handsome travelling dress of the reign of Louis XV., c. from L.*

FRANC. (L.) Where is the Marquis; where is my dear husband?

ALL. Her dear husband!

MARQ. Who the devil's this?

FRANC. Ah! Ten thousand pardons, Monseigneur, but I am so overpowered with joy, so delighted to find that I have returned in time to present my humble duty to your Royal Highness. I have travelled like a whirlwind; knocked up three horses and a postillion; and after all, only imagine, the carriage itself broke down in a miserable village three leagues from hence, no possibility of getting it repaired; but nothing stops me, nothing—(to MARQUIS) does it, my love?

MAD. Her love!

MARQ. Madam—I—

FRANC, (*aside to MARQUIS*) Hush! I come to save

you. I had a side-saddle instantly put on the horse of my avant-courier, and leaving my people to take charge of my equipage, galloped by myself, every inch of the way. Ha, ha, ha! Look at my poor dear husband; he didn't expect me this month. He was particularly desirous, from some motive or other, that our marriage should not be known in this neighbourhood at present; but the moment he wrote to me that he expected a visit from your Royal Highness, I ordered my horses, and was on my road before daylight the next morning. I knew there would be all sorts of difficulties; but nothing stops me, nothing.

PRINCE. Enchanted, Madame, and I assure you much flattered also by the haste you have made to afford me the gratification of forming your acquaintance. (*crosses to MARQUIS*) This is indeed, Marquis, a most fair reason—Monsieur le Vidame, the Marquis is married already!

MARQ. (*aside*) I'm petrified!

MERLU. Is it possible?

FRANC. Is it possible! Pray, Sir, who are you, who venture to make such an observation? Possible! Ha, ha! Why, my dear Marquis, I suppose I shall be asked next to produce my marriage settlement for the inspection of this—person. Who are you, Sir, I ask? the butler—steward—or bailiff—or——

MERLU. Butler! Bailiff! Madam! I have the honour to be attached to the Bishop of Poitiers.

FRANC. I am very sorry for the Bishop. The first time he gave us the pleasure of his company to dinner, I shall advise him to discharge you; and who is this elderly female?

MAD. Elderly female?

FRANC. Is she also attached to the Bishop? Heaven help him! His housekeeper, I suppose. My dear Marquis, how is it that I find his Royal Highness and yourself in company with such—Canaille?

MERLU. Canaille! Sacrebleau! Canaille! The De Merluchéts' canaille! Your Royal Highness!

MARQ. (*aside*) who ever she is, I love her for that; I love her for that.

PRINCE. (*aside*) What a delicious firebrand it is!

FRANC. I beg your Royal Highness a thousand pardons;

but to be stared at, and have remarks made, by such persons, because, forsooth, it pleased the Marquis de Richeville to marry a lady without their knowledge. I suppose they would have had him ask their permission, or their master's, the Bishop of Poitiers. That the poor servants below should look rather astonished, was natural enough; but that these persons, whatever their business might be, should presume, under my own roof, before my noble husband, before your Royal Highness. Oh, I am aware, that in your presence, Monseigneur, I ought not to have flown out, but, I can't help it, it's my nature. When I'm offended, nothing stops me, nothing!

PRINCE. (*aside*) She's positively charming in her little tantrums!

MARQ. (*aside*) I haven't a notion what all this means. But she plays my game for me; and I love her for that! I love her for that.

MAD. (*aside to MERLUCHLET*) Married! all our hopes are ruined, Vidame.

MERLU. (*aside*) I don't believe it; it's some trick. I've seen that face before somewhere, and that lately; I'll take my oath of it. (*aloud*) Notwithstanding this unexpected obstacle, I contend the Marquis is bound to repair the injury he has done my noble cousin, Mademoiselle de Merluchét, here present; and I, Antoine Cæsar de Merluchét, Vidame de Poitiers, call upon your Royal Highness for justice.

FRANC. Oh! you are the Vidame de Poitiers, are you? Aha! I think I've heard talk of you, Monsieur le Vidame. The Duke de Chevreuse, or the Countess de Grandpré, or some friend of ours, I forget whom, told me you were drummed out of the Grey Musqueteers.

MERLU. Drummed out! Ventrebleu! Invalided, your Royal Highness.

MAR. (*aside*) Drummed out! Drummed out! I love her for that; I love her for that!

PRINCE. Ah! to be sure; I thought your face was familiar to me.

MERLU. I have often had the honour of meeting your Royal Highness at Versailles.

PRINCE. Yes, yes; and your Colonel told me some

stories not very creditable to your reputation, Monsieur le Vidame.

MERLU. (*aside*) He *does* recollect me. (*aloud*) Calumny! All jealousy, malice! indeed, your Royal Highness.

FRANC. I will ask the Bishop if he has heard these stories. And how have you offended this poor old lady, my dear?

MAD. Poor old lady!

FRANC. This Mademoiselle de Merluchon.

MERLU. *Chét!*

MAD. Aye, libertine, answer your wife, if she is your wife. What will she say, when she learns your licentious conduct?

FRANC. (L. c.) Towards *you*?

MAD. Yes, towards *me*, Madam.

FRANC. Oh, oh, oh! My dear Marquis, you never could.

MARQ. (L.) No, never.

FRANC. I should think not, indeed. Ha, ha, ha! I beg your Royal Highness ten thousand pardons: but the idea is so very ridiculous! Ha, ha, ha! I must laugh. Ha, ha! And when I once begin to laugh, nothing stops me, nothing.

MAD. Impertinent!

MARQ. (*aside*) Delightful!

PRINCE. (*aside*) The most original little creature! I'm positively in love with her. (*goes up*)

MERLU. (R. c. *aside*) That laugh convinces me. The audacious hussey! (*aloud*) Harkye, young woman!

FRANC. (*turning upon him quickly and severely*) Monsieur!

MERLU. (*staggered by her sang froid*) I—no—I thought—if I am in error—I—(*aside*) Sacrebleu! It never can be; she could not have the impudence. (PRINCE *sits*)

FRANC. My good people, if you have any complaints to make against the Marquis de Richeville, you will be kind enough to choose the proper place and time. This is our chateau, his Royal Highness is at present our guest, and if you have any manners you must feel that you are intruders here. Who waits?

*Enter PAGE, R.H.*

—Mademoiselle de Merluchou's carriage, if she has one.

MERLU. *Chét*——

MAD. Your Royal Highness!

PRINCE. The Marchioness is in the right, Mademoiselle. It is surely not in her own chateau and presence that this matter should be canvassed. I have heard your statement and will certainly give it due consideration.

MERLU. The honour of an ancient family is in the hands of your Royal Highness. (*aside*) I'll instantly to the mill—If she's not Francine, she's the devil.

[*Exeunt DE MERLUCHET and MADemoisELLE, R.H. 1 E., PRINCE rises.*]

MARQ. Whoever she is, she's my guardian angel! I'll humour her, I will by Jupiter! (*aloud*) My dear Marchioness, you arrived most apropos.

FRANC. Ah, my love, you forgive me then, for not having waited for your summons. I thought you would be glad to see me, notwithstanding all your scruples, and I couldn't bear the thought of staying in our splendid chateau in Normandy, surrounded by every luxury, whilst you were, for wise reasons, no doubt, suffering all kinds of privations in this old tumble-down, unfurnished, what shall I call in, Ah, Monseigneur, you have no notion what a kind, liberty self-denying creature my dear husband is. To see him here in this shabby coat, and in this dirty dreary house nobody would know him to be the same person they have seen at his place in Normandy—a perfect paradise, Monseigneur.

PRINCE. (*aside*) Now I'm convinced.

MARQ. (*aside*) Mercy on me—if she means Belmont, it's a ruin, there are but four walls.

FRANC. Ah, Monseigneur, that's the mansion I should have been proud to have received you in. The Marquis has laid out on it, since we have been married, and that's scarcely six months, three hundred thousand francs.

PRINCE. Indeed!

MARQ. (*aside*) Heaven forbid!

FRANC. And all because it is my favourite residence. There I am queen—there I scatter gold about me—there

I make everybody happy; it is his wish I should do so. Oh, he's a dear good creature! Kiss me! Monseigneur will excuse you, won't you, Monseigneur?

PRINCE. Oh, Marchioness, there is something quite touching——

MARQ. (*aside*) I'll humour her, I will by Jupiter. (*she holds her cheek to him—he kisses her*) She's a very fine creature whoever she is.

FRANC. Ha, ha! I dare be sworn your Royal Highness thinks us an odd couple. I know nothing of etiquette—and the Marquis but little. We live for ourselves, like old fashioned country people—and, good gracious! here's a proof. We have suffered your Royal Highness to remain in this great cold hall and never offered you any refreshment.

MARQ. His Royal Highness declined to accept—was about to depart.

FRANC. Depart!

PRINCE. I had determined; but the moment you request——

FRANC. Oh, Monseigneur!

PRINCE. To say truth, I had spoken rather severely to the Marquis, and refused his suit. I had imagined, from appearances—but I am happy to learn from such lips that I have been deceived.

MARQ. Oh, Monseigneur! (*aside*) I shall be Governor! Get the orders, the place, the—she's an angel!

FRANC. Marquis, attend his Royal Highness over the chateau and gardens, as I am a stranger to this building. I will give instant orders to the household to make every exertion——

MARQ. (*aside*) But take care——

FRANC. To spare no expense.

MARQ. (*aside*) Oh, the devil!

FRANC. Leave all to your little wife, as you do in Normandy. Within, there! Pages, Valets, Everybody!

*Enter PAGES, SERVANTS, &c. from different entrances.*

—His Royal Highness stays to dinner.

MARQ. But——

FRANC. Oh yes; I know. It doesn't signify; I'll manage. When I set about a matter, nothing stops me, nothing! *[Exit c. and R., followed by SERVANTS.]*

MARQ. *(aside)* Distraction!

PRINCE. Delightful! Come, Marquis.

MARQ. This way, your Royal Highness.

*[Exeunt as the act-drop descends—Bells heard in every direction.]*

END OF ACT FIRST.

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## ACT II.

SCENE I.—*Same as last Scene.—Table and Chairs as before.*

*Enter THIERRY, l e. r. h.*

THIER. It doesn't signify—I can remain cooped up no longer. I am on thorns to know the issue of Francine's daring project! The Prince de Conti is here. She surely will not venture to impose on his Royal Highness. She was to join me as soon as she had an opportunity and tell me what had occurred. I see nothing of her. I am getting terribly alarmed on her account. Ah! There is somebody now coming. 'Tis Francine—still in the travelling dress I was lucky enough to borrow for her—how well she looks in it—she was surely born to be a lady!

*Enter FRANCINE, c. from R.*

FRANC. Ah! There you are!

THIER. (l.c.) I began to be frightened.

FRANC. You've no cause; all has gone famously; but I was only just in time.

THIER. My uncle——

FRANC. Puzzled, but pleased.

THIER. The Vidame——

FRANC. Puzzled, and not pleased.

THIER. The Prince——

FRANC. Perfectly satisfied.

THIER. And Mademoiselle de Merluchét——

FRANC. Quite the reverse.

THIER. Bravo! and what hope for me?

FRANC. Oh, I have not touched upon that subject yet; but I am pretty confident. The Marquis evidently feels that his fate is in my hands, by his letting me pass for his wife.

THIER. Did he acknowledge you from the first?

FRANC. Not exactly acknowledge, but he didn't contradict, which was quite sufficient for my purpose; and he seemed to enjoy the rage and disappointment of the Merluchéts amasingly! Ha, ha! I carried my head high enough, I promise you, and treated them as very—trumpery—persons—indeed. (*acting the MARCHIONESS*)

THIER. My dear Francine, you astonish as well as delight me. Upon my honour, I have seen many a lady at Versailles who couldn't be compared to you for manner or appearance.

FRANC. Oh, Cornet, you flatter me.

THIER. And powder becomes you amazingly.

FRANC. Powder! Nay, now you flatter my *flour*. Ha, ha! There's plenty more where that came from. It was a capital thought, and nobody knows the difference. Ha, ha! I wonder what the Marquis will say to me when we meet by ourselves, for I started him off with the Prince, while I stole out to speak to you.

THIER. And what am I to do now, remain here?

FRANC. No, come with me. The few servants are all busy enough making preparations for such a dinner as they have not seen within these walls for many a day. The Marquis is still out in the park, with the Prince; you must be at hand in case I want you.

THIER. (*starting and calling her attention*) The Vidame!

FRANC. And Mademoiselle de Merluchét. Ah, they are returning to the charge. Away, before they see us; follow me, quickly.

*Exeunt, c. and R.*

*Enter DE MERLUCHET and MADEMOISELLE, R.H.*

MERLU. Be guided by me, my dear cousin; I am certain my suspicions are well founded, and if we can prove to the

Prince that the Marquis has hired this woman to impose upon his Royal Highness we shall be doubly revenged. The Prince will be indignant at the trick put upon him, and grateful to us for exposing it.

MAD. But you have no proof, as yet, cousin.

MERLU. I have strong circumstantial evidence; I went to the mill, Francine is not there; I went down into the village, made inquiries at the inn, nobody had heard of any carriage having broken down on the road; and, moreover, no lady had been seen to ride through the village.

MAD. She might have come some other way.

MERLU. No, no, cousin; I tell you it is Francine the miller; Francine Preval, a soldier's widow, as she gives herself out, who came here about a month ago and took the old mill off Farmer Beaupré's hands; and, being uncommonly handsome——

MAD. Handsome!—well, there is no accounting for taste, if that is the woman.

MERLU. Oh, come, come, cousin, she's devilish good looking, I must admit that; and the image, I tell you, of Francine. Though I have seen the widow but twice, and both times when it was nearly dusk, I would swear to her eyes and her laugh, the very identical laugh with which the impudent baggage shut the door in my face three nights ago.

MAD. How, cousin! have you condescended to call?

MERLU. (*aside*) Ahem! confound it! (*aloud*) Oh, only in my official capacity, as Vidame; you know I——

MAD. If I could imagine that one of my family——

MERLU. Oh, of course; but you can't—the very idea—a De Merluchét, and in my position! (*aside*) Sacrebleu! I had nearly made a hole in my manners! (*aloud*) The only thing that puzzles me is, where she could get the dress and the horse from—for it's a good horse, I've seen it, the Marquis never had such a beast in his stables.

MAD. But in this case, he might have provided——

MERLU. So he might, so he must—for who else was interested! However, come along cousin; I have got my plan in my head—'tis a very simple one.

MAD. Your head, cousin!

MERLU. No, my plan—but perhaps not the worse for that

Her confidence staggered me this morning, but I have now made up my mind, and if I don't bring her down on her marrowbones I'll consent to be tied up in one of her own flour sacks and pitched into the fish-pond.

[*Exeunt, c.*

*Enter* MARQUIS, L.H.

MARQ. I'm in a dream ! certainly I must be in a dream ! The Prince has changed his tone altogether to me, he is most gracious, most friendly, and has actually hinted that I may calculate upon the King's favourable consideration of my request : it's all owing to that lady, who pretends to be my wife, there can be no doubt of that. The Prince admits that her account of me has given him great satisfaction. Who, in the name of wonder, can she be ? and what object can she have in thus coming to my rescue, both from the anger of the Prince, and the machinations of that cursed Vidame, and his gorgon of a cousin. I have never seen the lady before. I am certain I could not have forgotten such a charming creature—for she is a *very* charming creature. The Prince allows that ; he complimented me exceedingly on my good taste ; and was very curious to know who she was before she became Marchioness de Richeville ! Egad, so am I ; but I didn't know how to answer him. It was fortunate at that moment that he suddenly remembered he had a dispatch to write. I've made my escape ; and must endeavour to come to an explanation with this soi-disant wife of mine, if she have not vanished in a whirlwind !

FRANCINE *enters, and opens c. door.*

—Ah, Ah, you are here, madam ! I was just wishing to see you.

FRANC. And I come at a wish you see—impossible to have a more attentive wife.

MARQ. Aye, aye, aye ; that's all very well ; but at last we are alone, madam.

FRANC. A tête a tête—how delightful !

MARQ. That's as it may be. There is nobody to overhear us, and I must request you to tell me directly who you are ?

FRANC. Guess.

MARQ. Guess ! Impossible ! I've turned my brain guessing—so tell me your real name immediately.

FRANC. No.

MARQ. You refuse?

FRANC. Positively.

MARQ. But you'll tell me——

FRANC. Nothing.

MARQ. The deuce—well—but—but harkye, madam ; suppose I don't choose to carry on this farce ; you are aware there is considerable danger in imposing upon his Royal Highness, and one word from me——

FRANC. Say it.

MARQ. Say it ! do you know what will happen to you if I do say it ?

FRANC. No ; but I know what will happen to *you*.

MARQ. Eh ?

FRANC. The Prince will return to his first impressions, and find you to be a miserly, narrow-minded, hard-hearted man, whose penurious habits have made him look an old shrivelled up pantaloon, of sixty, instead of a well-favoured nobleman of five-and-forty ; and whose name, instead of being the pride of the whole country, is a bye word for scorn and detestation amongst his own tenants.

MARQ. Madam ! Madam !

FRANC. I haven't half done yet. The Prince will find out *this*, and consequently prevent your obtaining whatever it is your desire, whilst Madmoiscle Merluchét——

MARQU. Ah !

FRANC. Who is now at the hall door with the Vidame, finding the only bar to their project removed, will press their suites again upon his Royal Highness, who, too happy to revenge himself on you for assisting in his deception will——

MARQ. Enough, enough ——

FRANC. I should think so ; but people's tastes differ ; so farewell. If you please, you have no wife—I dropped from the clouds, and I am gone in a——

MARQ. No, no ; stay, I entreat—you say Mademoiselle de Merluchét is at the hall door ?

FRANC. She and the Vidame were on the steps as I passed through the gallery.

MARQ. Fiends confound them !

FRANC. *I'll* confound them if you leave them to me, and save the fiends the trouble ; but if you insist——

MARQ. I insist on nothing ; do whatever you please ; say whatever you like ; only save me from that woman—and obtain me what I request from his Majesty.

FRANC. Then I am your wife——

MARQ. You are, that is, as far as——

FRANC. As far as *I* please, no farther ; all you have to do is to sanction any act of mine as Marchioness de Richeville.

MARQ. (*hesitatingly*) Y—yes ; but you won't——

FRANC. Don't be alarmed ; I will do nothing but what you *ought* to do—nothing that should cause you a moment's repentance. I am sorry to say there is no great difficulty in a woman's being the better half of such a man as *you* are, or rather as you have made yourself.

MARQ. Madam, madam——

FRANC. Oh, what I *do* tell you will be the truth, depend upon it ; and now, the first thing I have to propose to you is a good action.

MARQ. A good action ! How much will it cost ?

FRANC. A trifle to you. I wish to draw upon your good nature more than your banker.

MARQ. In that case, what is it ?

FRANC. Marquis, you have, or I may say, *we* have a nephew.

MARQ. A nephew ! (*aside*) Oh, the devil !

FRANC. The son of a sister, who, being ten years older than yourself, did not think it necessary to consult you in the choice of a husband.

MARQ. And so degraded herself by marrying——

FRANC. An honest man—whose son, now two-and-twenty, a very nice young fellow, is a Cornet of Cavalry, and most desirous of being on good terms with his uncle.

MARQ. I'll have nothing to say to him ; he's no nephew of mine. I've turned him out of every house I own in the kingdom.

FRANC. And now you'll send for him to this.

MARQ. Never.

FRANC. Yes, you will—think again, he's a very fine young man, and only wants your consent to marry a young lady of good family, and some fortune ; the daughter of a general officer.

MARQ. He may marry anybody he likes ; but I'll never acknowledge him, or set my eyes on him, if I can help it.

FRANC. Yes, you will——

MARQ. Never, never, never !

FRANC. Very well, then I'll ring the bell——

MARQ. Ring the bell—what for ?

FRANC. To desire the Page to say you will be happy to see Mademoiselle de Merluchét.

MARQ. No, no ; not for the world !

FRANC. You must see one or the other ; your nephew or Mademoiselle de Merluchét.

MARQ. (*aside*) She'll drive me mad ! What shall I do ! (*aloud*) Well of the two, if I must, I'll—I'll see the fellow.

FRANC. And acknowledge him——

MARQ. Perhaps, if he behaves himself, some day or another.

FRANC. Unconditionally—and as soon as he arrives.

MARQ. Ah, well, well ; when he arrives, we shall see. (*aside*) Thank Heaven, he's at Versailles, with his regiment ; it may be some days—anything to gain time. (*aloud*) But you must fulfil your part of the bargain.

FRANC. Of course ; oh, don't fear me. I'll make you a capital wife, and do you a great deal more good than you dream of. I'll transform you, remodel you, renovate you ; you shall be respected, loved, adored—fancy that, adored ! what a novelty it will be to you.

MARQ. I'm afraid it will be a very expensive novelty.

FRANC. You'll find it cheap at the price.

MARQ. Not if it ruins me.

FRANC. Very well, you prefer being ruined by the De Merluchéts——(*going to bell*)

MARQ. No, no ; for mercy's sake, don't ring.

FRANC. Surrender, then, unconditionally ; or nothing stops me, nothing.

MARQ. I do, I do——(*she rings the bell*)—I tell you I do ; what d'ye ring for ?

*Enter PAGE, L.*

FRANC. Don't be alarmed. (*to PAGE*) You will inform the household, that the Marquis de Richeville; in honour of his Royal Highness's arrival, has commanded that an ox should be killed and roasted in the park, and wine served out of his cellars to every person who chooses to partake of it.

MARQ. (*aside*) But——

FRANC. (*aside*) Be quiet. (*to PAGE*) Do you hear me Sir?

PAGE. (*astonished*) Ye—yes, Madame.

FRANC. And tell the servants that they shall have new liveries as soon as they can be made, and that he doubles all their wages.

MARQ. (*aside*) Doubles—hold!

FRANC. (*aside*) Hold your tongue. (*to PAGE*) D'ye hear me, Sir?

PAGE. (*still more astonished*) Ye—yes, Madame.

FRAN. What are your wages?

PAGE. I humbly beg your pardon, Madame, but I have no wages.

FRANC. Never mind, he'll double them. Tell the steward to distribute a thousand francs amongst the poor of the village.

PAGE. Yes, Madame.

MARQ. (*aside*) But s'death!

FRANC. (*aside to him*) You'll be adored!

MARQ. But I don't want——

FRANC. (*to PAGE*) And to bring five hundred louis d'ors to the Marquis, for his casual expences.

MARQ. No, no, no!

FRANC. (*aside to him*) You'll be respected.

MARQ. But I don't care. (*rises*)

FRANC. Oh, very well. (*to PAGE*) Go to Mademoiselle de Merluchét, and say the Marquis——

MARQ. (*aside*) No, no, I am satisfied. I will be adored—respected.

FRANC. And say the Marquis is not at home.

PAGE. Yes, Madame. Long live the Marquis de Richeville!  
[*Exit L.*]

FRANC. D'ye hear, Marquis? The poor fellow has

hardly got strength to say so ; but I'll fatten him up, and you too, before I've done with you.

MARQ. But I don't wish——

FRANC. But I do ; I can't have such a lean scarecrow of a husband as this is. Go, my dear Marquis, directly : put on the very best coat you have in your wardrobe. I know you've good clothes, though you won't wear them ; make yourself handsome for your little wife's sake, won't you, lovee ?

MARQ. (*aside*) She's a beautiful woman ; it's impossible to say no to her. (*aloud*) I will put on another coat.

FRANC. The handsomest you have, mind.

MARQ. The handsomest I have.

MERLUCHET, *putting his head out of the door, c., and calling* " Francine ! "

FRANC. (*turning quickly*) Eh !

*Enter DE MERLUCHET quickly, followed by MADemoiselle*  
C.

MERLU. Bravo ! Victoria ! 'Tis she ! Ha, ha, ha

MAD. Ha, ha, ha ! Francine !—Francine Preval !

FRANC. (*aside*) Discovered !—but not defeated.

MARQ. Francine ! what does this mean ?

MERLU. It means, Marquis, that this woman, whom you have ventured to put off upon his Royal Highness as your wife, is Francine Preval, who keeps the mill we spoke of this morning.

FRANC. And what then ?

MERLU. What then ?

MAD. What then ?

FRANC. Yes, what then ? Ha ha, ha ! Eh, my dear ! (*to MARQUIS*) They have made a wonderful discovery, certainly ! Ha, ha, ha !

MAD. Her dear ! The audacious minx !

FRANC. How dare you insult the Marchioness de Richeville under her own roof, you ridiculous piece of withered iniquity ? What is it to you or to that old intriguing libertine, that drummed out *very* grey musqueteer, if the Marchioness de Richeville chooses to occupy a mill on her own estate, or a pigstye ? Out of my house, or I'll call my servants and have you both tossed in a blanket.

MAD. Ah, Vidame!

MERLU. Tossed in a blanket—confusion!

MARQ. (*aside*) She's a Duchess at least. What should I do without her?

*Enter PRINCE, L.*

PRINCE. What is the matter, Marchioness?

FRANC. Oh, Monseigneur, merely an exchange of compliments between us and the De Merluchettes.

MERLU. (*correcting her*) *Chéts!*

PRINCE. I thought, Mademoiselle, you understood me this morning when I told you I should take your case into consideration.

MAD. Perfectly, your Royal Highness; but permit me to say that our return was occasioned by a desire to serve your Royal Highness.

PRINCE. To serve me!

MERLU. Yes, Sir, to prevent your being made a dupe of—(*FRANCINE turns on him*)—I name nobody.

PRINCE. I am not so easily made a dupe, Vidame, as you may imagine.

FRANC. Monseigneur, to your Royal Highness I *do* owe an explanation, which shall be made at your pleasure; but this much I will now, with your permission, state before these persons, and inform them, to their confusion, that my residence, for a short period, under an assumed name in this neighbourhood, has enabled me to detect and defeat their vile conspiracy against my noble husband.

MERLU. Conspiracy!

FRANC. Yes, most respectable Vidame de Poitiers—conspiracy! and for proof—(*rings the bell*)

MARQ. (*aside*) What is she going to do now?

MERLU. (*aside*) Zounds! if that's for the blanket—

*Enter PAGE, C.D.*

FRANC. Desire the gentleman, who is at the end of the gallery, to walk this way. (*PAGE bows and exits C.D.*)

MARQ. (*aside*) Gentleman; what gentleman?

MAD. (*aside to MERLUCHET*) Who can she mean, cousin?

MERLU. (*aside to her*) I'm bewitched! I don't know what anything means.

FRANC. I request permission, Monseigneur, to present to you the Marquis's nephew, who has just arrived at the chateau.

MARQ. My nephew ! arrived !

MERLU. (*aside*) His nephew ! why I thought——

PRINCE. I shall be delighted——

FRANC. An agreeable surprise to you, my love.

MARQ. Agreeable !

FRANC. (*aside to him*) Remember our bargain.

MARQ. Oh, most agreeable !

*Re-enter PAGE, followed by THIERRY, C.D.*

PAGE. (*announcing*) Monsieur Dumont.

MERLU. (*aside*) The Cornet ! The Devil ! Has she *made* him a nephew, or is he really——

FRANC. My dear Thierry, present your respects to the Prince de Conti, and then embrace your uncle, who opens his affectionate arms—(*aside to MARQUIS*) Open your affectionate arms.

THIER. Dear uncle, will you permit me——

MARQ. (*aside*) There's no help for it. (*aloud*) My dear nephew. (*embraces him*)

MAD. (*aside to MERLUCHET*) Is that the nephew we heard he had discarded ?

MERLU. (*aside*) Don't ask me ; I'm in a fog.

FRANC. I believe, Thierry, that you have the misfortune to be acquainted with that person. (*pointing to MERLUCHET*)

THIER. The Vidame ! Oh, yes ; he did me the honour, this morning, to invite me to visit him at the Chateau de Richeville ; and here I am, Vidame, but you don't appear overjoyed to see me ; may I beg to be introduced to your cousin, who, by your management, was to become my aunt.

PRINCE. Management—Vidame !

MERLU (*aside*) Confound my imprudence !

THIER. I'm afraid you'll be compelled, after all, to marry her yourself, according to the first arrangement, though she is, as you say, as dilapidated as her own castle.

MAD. How ! Vidame ! Is it possible—that you——

MERLU. No, no ; you can't believe it. (*aside*) The young traitor !

FRANC. Oh, fie, Vidame! when you were engaged to such a noble and virtuous maiden, to run after a poor widow in the dusk of the evening, and came puffing up a hill to get the door of her cottage shut in your face! Ha, ha, ha!

MAD. How, Vidame! did you really—

MERLU. No, no; I explained to you—I—(*aside*) The malicious gipsy! This is all a plot—a counterplot, I am convinced—and I'll be revenged on them yet. (*aloud*) Sir, I have too much respect for your Royal Highness to refute at the present moment these scandalous assertions; I only beg most humbly to warn your Royal Highness that you are deceived! (FRANCINE *turns on him*) I name nobody. (*to MADEMOISELLE*) Come along, cousin.

MAD. Your Royal Highness's most devoted humble servant.

MERLUCHET and MADLLE. *bow and curtsy profoundly to the PRINCE, and exeunt c.d.*

FRANC. See what it is to have an affectionate nephew!

MARQ. Why, certainly, if he can prove——

THIER. The Vidame acknowledged as much to me this morning, little dreaming of my relationship.

FRANC. Yes, Monseigneur, and said he knew the Marquis had a nephew somewhere, whom he wouldn't own nor give a louis d'or to. Can you imagine people being malicious enough to spread such reports! Fortunately, your Royal Highness is present, to witness their falsity; not acknowledge his dear sister's only child, who never did anything to offend him! Why, he would have been a brute, wouldn't you, my love?

MARQ. No, certainly not.

FRANC. No; you're right, my dear; not a brute, for brutes never do such things, but worse, a heartless fool, instead of the kind, sensible creature you are; and as to not giving him a louis d'or, why we are only waiting for the opportunity to purchase him a regiment—

THIER. Oh, my dear uncle—

MARQ. Nay, madame—madame—I—this is too much.

FRANC. Oh dear, dear! my love, I beg you a thousand pardons. I know I promised you to say nothing about that till you had bought it; but it popped out, I couldn't help

it, in my anxiety to vindicate you, to win the everlasting gratitude of your nephew.

MARQ. But I don't want—

FRANC. No, I know you don't; you hate to be thanked, it's quite a failing of yours—it is indeed, Monseigneur, (to PRINCE) he can't bear to be thanked. Nobody knows the good he does in private, do they Thierry?

THEIR. Nobody would believe it if they were told.

PRINCE. (*aside*) I don't for one.

*Enter PAGE, c.d.*

FRANC. Well, Sir?

PAGE. The steward, madame, with the money——

MARQ. Money! what money?

PAGE. The five hundred louis you ordered, Sir, for your casual expenses.

MARQ. (to FRANCINE) I—no—it was—you——

FRANC. It was at your request; its all the same. Go Thierry, and take it from the steward, the money is for you.

MARQ. For him? no, no! (*aside*) I shall go mad!

FRANC. Well, it is to buy the trousseau for his bride, my love; and if it's hers, it's his it comes to the same thing you know.

THIER. Your consent, and five hundred louis! Oh, my dear generous uncle!

MARQ. (*aside*) Distraction! (*aloud*) I can't—I won't—

FRANC. No, no; you shall not be worried; say nothing more about it Thierry, but go and take the money (*exit THIERRY, c.d.*) and Monseigneur will excuse you, my love, I'm sure, while you dress for dinner, as you were about to do, when that odious Mademoiselle de Merluchet—(*aside*)—Obedience, or I'll call her back and tell the Prince everything——

MARQ. (*who, up to the mention of Mad. de Merluchet, shows signs of rebellion*) Well, well, I'll go. (*aside*) Five hundred louis to that young vagabond! Oh, if the Prince were but gone if I would'nt—(FRANCINE *looks at him*)—with your Highness's permission——

PRINCE. No ceremony, I beg, Marquis.

[*Exit MARQUIS, l.h.*]

FRANC. And I, too, must request—

PRINCE. One moment, my fair hostess; I have been waiting for this opportunity, and must not neglect it; you have too much wit yourself, Madame, to imagine that you are deceiving me.

FRANC. (*aside*) Ha! he does suspect me; but how far? (*aloud*) Monseigneur, at the risk of being charged with vanity, I acknowledge the justice of the compliment. I never expected to deceive your Royal Highness.

PRINCE. It was impossible. The miserly and ignoble conduct of the Marquis was a matter of too much notoriety; and your amiable and clever attempt to gloss over the offences and save the reputation of your husband——

FRANC. (*aside*) My husband—good, good!

PRINCE. Raises you in my estimation, but does not blind me to the facts of the case. I know that the castle in Normandy which you represented as a paradise, is a ruin; that his other mansions are at least as neglected as this; that, with cellars full of wine and coffers full of gold, he starves his household and racks his tenantry; I know the whole story of his nephew, whom I remember at Versailles, and am certain that his present reception is owing to your influence and the Marquis's fears.

FRANC. I acknowledge——

PRINCE. There is no occasion. I can feel how painful all this must be to you, who are evidently so differently constituted, and my only wonder is, what motive could have ever induced you to link yourself to such a man; surely, such spirit, such beauty——

FRANC. Oh, Monseigneur; (*aside*) Excellent!

PRINCE. It was not for his money, I am sure.

FRANC. No, indeed, Monseigneur; nor for his rank, although your Royal Highness must have seen at a glance, that I have no pretensions to high birth or breeding.

PRINCE. I saw at a glance that you were a charming little creature. full of spirit and feeling, and worthy the love of a Prince.

FRANC. A Prince—Oh, Monseigneur! (*aside*) Are you there already, Sir?

PRINCE. Yes, adorable woman; and could the one

before you but hope for a return of the passion with which you have inspired him—

FRANC. Monseigneur, Monseigneur! I must not listen to this.

PRINCE. Nay, I entreat, I implore; in a moment we may be interrupted. You cannot love this old miser.

FRANC. Old!—he's only forty-five.

PRINCE. He looks a hundred. You will not submit to be starved!

FRANC. Starved! Do I look as if I was starved?

PRINCE. Well, no, certainly you do not; but I am sure he begrudges every mouthful you eat; and I'll be bound, now, you have not a better dress than the one now on your back.

FRANC. Well, I own that.

PRINCE. I knew it; and that accounts for the story of the carriage breaking down—the journey from Normandy—ah, my fair romancer!

FRANC. I admit——

PRINCE. Then listen to the prayer of one who adores you; who, for your sake, will heap such favours and fortune upon the Marquis, that he cannot avoid surrounding you with all the splendour of your station. At the brilliant Court of Versailles, to which his duty must call him, you will shine in your proper sphere, and be the observed of all observers.

FRANC. Monseigneur, there is some one coming; let me go, *now* I entreat——

PRINCE. *Now* yes—if you'll promise to meet me again.

FRANC. I will, I will.

PRINCE. Alone.

FRANC. Alone.

PRINCE. Where?

FRANC. Near the pavilion, in the gardens.

PRINCE. When?

FRANC. Presently, as soon as I can escape. Here's the Marquis—he may suspect from my confusion.

PRINCE. I fly to the pavilion.

*Exit* PRINCE, R.H.

FRANC. And I to seek Thierry.

*Exit* FRANCINE, C.D.

*Re-enter MARQUIS, richly dressed, L.H.*

MARQ. I've not worn this suit since I was at Court three years ago. It cost a great deal of money at that time ; and was said to become me. I think it does become me. I wonder if that extraordinary creature, who calls herself my wife, will be of the same opinion. Parbleu ! if she were not so extravagant ; she's a very charming woman ; but I must put a stop to her follies. I won't have my money made ducks and drakes of in this way. Let me get the Prince's promise respecting the Government, the orders, and so forth, and his Royal Highness once fairly off my estate, I'll talk to my rogue of a nephew, who, it strikes me, is at the bottom of all this, (*shouts without of "Long live the Marquis," R.H.*) "Long live the Marquis !" meaning me, (*listens—they shout again*). The effect is not disagreeable, really, if it didn't cost so much.

*Enter THIERRY, C.D.*

—Oh ! you are there, you young villain, are you ! give me my money again.

THIER. My dear uncle, I have already done so ; your steward has returned it to the strong chest, by my desire.

MARQ. Ha ! is it possible ! what all ? You've not kept any of it——

THIER. Not a fraction. I came, Sir, to assure you that unless it was the free gift of your affections, I would not accept a sous of it.

MARQ. Humph ! Then you know it was not a free gift. You *are* in a plot against me.

THIER. Against you, uncle ! no, on my honour.

MARQ. What brings you here, then Sir ? How is it you are known to that—that—very extraordinary creature who calls herself—that is to say. (*aside*) Confound it, it's very awkward ; if he doesn't know, I may put myself in his power

THIER. My dear uncle, I am commissioned by the kind friend to whom you allude, to request you will follow me, where everything shall be explained. So far from being in a plot against you, we are both risking all but our lives to expose and defeat the De Merluchéts, and to secure for

you the influence of the Prince de Conti. These two important objects achieved, we take our leave of you, if it be your wish, for ever.

MARQ. For ever—Humph! what—the lady—the—there's no reason—if you should—that she should—that is—provided—I should——

THIER. Oh, Sir, one affectionate word from you would rivet us both to the spot.

MARQ. Both (*aside*) peste—I don't care about *both*; but the lady is certainly—(*aloud*) Who the devil is she, Sir; will you tell me that?

THIER. Follow me, Sir, and you shall know all.

MARQ. Whither?

THIER. To the pavilion in the gardens, near which she has appointed to meet the prince.

MARQ. To meet the Prince! what for?

THIER. His royal highness is desperately smitten with her.

MARQ. Smitten with her—with my—with the Marchioness de Richeville?—for if he doesn't know, it's just as bad!

THIER. Exactly.

MARQ. Exactly! and can you talk so coolly, Sir, when the honour of your aunt—that is, of your uncle—it's scandalous, abominable! I'll not bear it tamely; Prince or no Prince, I'll have satisfaction!

THIER. (*aside*) By Jove, I believe he's smitten himself. (*aloud*) Patience, my dear uncle; follow me, you shall have satisfaction.

MARQ. I will, though it cost me my life!

THIER. Or your fortune!

MARQ. Aye, parbleu!—everything I'm worth in the world!

THIER. Bravissimo!

[*Exeunt*, R.H.]

SCENE II.—*The Exterior of a Pavilion in the Gardens of the Chateau.*

*The PRINCE discovered, waiting.*

PRIN. She's a long time coming; what can detain her? I am all impatience. I never was more fascinated; there is a freshness, an originality about her! If she had been

simply like any other woman of quality, a mere high-born handsome Marchioness deRicheville, I might have admired; but I should not have been so completely captivated as I almost blush to own to myself I am. To think of that miserly wretch possessing such a treasure; and hoarding it up in secret, like his gold! Why the deuce don't she come? She doesn't, surely, mean to disappoint me!

*Goes up stage, watching, L.H.U.E.*

*Enter DE MERLUCHET and MADEMOISELLE, R.H.*

MERLU. Vengeance, vengeance!—we have them now! This evidence is conclusive, cousin. The lady's-maid, from whom that cursed cornet borrowed the dress for Francine, is still at the inn in the village. In my quality of Vidame, I terrified her into confession by pointing out the peril she was in as a confederate; and, in this letter to the Prince—eh! as I live, there he is: shall we give it at once into his hands, or—

PRINCE. (*descending the stage not seeing DE MERLUCHET*) She's coming—the angel!

MAD. (*aside*) The angel. Who's coming? Francine!

MERLU. Phew! The plot thickens. This has mightily the air of an assignation! Stand aside, cousin—so, so; discretion, Vidame—and attention, musqueteer!

*They conceal themselves on the R. of Pavilion.*

PRINCE. She's here,

*Enter FRANCINE, L.U.E.*

—My adorable Marchioness!

MERLU. (*aside*) I was certain. Oh, I've a nose!

FRANC. I staid to give such orders as would prevent any body's wandering this way; for should we be seen there is no knowing what interpretation might be given to such a meeting.

MAD. (*aside*) I should say there could be but one.

PRINCE. You are as clever as you are beautiful. I began to fear you had been prevented.

FRANC. Oh! I had given my word; and when I have once done that, nothing stops me—nothing!

PRINCE. Delicious!

*Enter* MARQUIS and THIERRY, L.U.E.

FRANC. (*aside*) They come? now for the grand blow.

MARQ. (*aside*) There they are, sure enough.

THIER. (*aside to him*) Here, behind here.

*They conceal themselves on the L. of Pavilion.*

PRINCE. Let us enter this Pavilion.

FRANC. No; what we have to say, can as well be said here.

PRINCE. What *we* have to say! I have already declared to you my love, my adoration! It is for you to speak, to decide my fate.

FRANC. Ah, Monseigneur, were I not the Marchioness de Richeville——

PRINCE. You would still be the most charming woman in the world.

FRANC. I have half a mind to put your Royal Highness' sincerity to the test.

PRINCE. I implore you to do so. What proof do you require?

FRANC. Your pardon, for having deceived you more than you imagined.

PRINCE. More! but it matters not;—what offence can you have committed that I would not pardon?

FRANC. I am not the Marchioness de Richeville——

PRINCE. *Not!*

MAD. (*aside*) Hah! she confesses.

MARQ. What did she own that for?

PRINCE. Not the wife of the Marquis!

FRANC. Nor the most charming woman in the world——

PRINCE. You are, you are; I care not: but if not his wife——

FRANC. Who and what am I? you would ask. Simply Francine, a miller's daughter, and the widow of a poor young soldier, who lost his life in your father's service.

MARQ. (*aside*) A miller's daughter! and I, who thought——

MERLU. (*aside*) Confound her; she's left us nothing to tell him.

MAD. But now we shall see.

PRINCE. And the Marquis has dared——

FRANC. Oh, Monseigneur, your pardon——

PRINCE. For you, my pretty widow, with all my heart, but not for him! He shall be punished as he deserves; and fortunately, there is vengeance at hand, in the person of Mademoiselle de Merluchét. The Marquis is not married, and I will exert my authority.

MERLU. (*aside*) Victory!

MARQ. (*aside*) I'm ruined!

THIER. Patience. (*restraining him*)

FRANC. Hear me, Monseigneur, the Marquis is innocent of any design to impose on your Royal Highness. His astonishment was equal to your own, when I was announced by his servants: at this moment even, he is still ignorant of my motives for the assumption; and you cannot in justice visit upon him an offence of which I alone am guilty.

MARQ. (*aside*) What a noble creature. She can't be a miller's daughter!

PRINCE. Nonsense, nonsense. He at any rate suffered me to be deceived.

FRANC. What could he do? He had fallen unsuspectingly into a vile snare set for his fortune by that old rogue, the Vidame, and his scarecrow of a cousin. One word would have made him their victim. He hailed me as his preserver, his good genius, and I trust still to be so. I have endeavoured to awaken in him the kind and generous feelings that distinguished his ancestors—to teach him the luxury of doing good—to restore a brave young nephew to his arms, and make him own the meanness of that pride which deprived him of a sister.

MARQ. (*forgetting himself*) He docs, he docs!

PRINCE. Hush! some one spoke. There are eavesdroppers.

FRANC. (*aside*) Imprudent!

PRINCE. If you have entrapped me. (*to FRANCINE*)

FRANC. (*catches sight of MERLUCHET*) Ah! look, look, Monseigneur!

PRINCE. (*darts forward, R., and discovers MERLUCHET and MADEMOISELLE*) The Vidame and his cousin!

FRANCINE *makes signs to THIERRY and MARQUIS, who disappear, L.H.*

—A worthy couple of spies!

MERLU. Monseigneur, by the merest accident——

PRINCE. Silence, Sir! Were you not beneath my notice——

MAD. We were seeking your Royal Highness, with proof that this woman——

*Enter MARQUIS and THIERRY, L.H. 1 E.*

MARQ. Spare yourself the trouble, Mademoiselle.

PRINCE. The Marquis! What a transformation!

MAD. (*to MERLUCHET*) Why, Vidame, he looks younger than you!

MERLU. (*aside*) And I, who hoped to be his heir!

MARQ. (*continuing to MADEMOISELLE*) And speak with more respect to the Marchioness de Richeville.

MERLU. She is not the Marchioness—and you know it—you have been deceiving his Royal Highness.

PRINCE. Silence, I say, begone.

MARQ. Permit me, Monseigneur, to say one word to those respectable people before they go; I repeat, before your Royal Highness, that this lady *is* the Marchioness de Richeville *elect*—if she will honour me by accepting the title.

MAD., MERLU., and PRINCE. How!

FRANC. (*aside*) Mercy on me, the man can't be serious!

MAD. Prefer a miller to a De Merluchét!

MERLU. Marry Francine! Here's grist to the mill, with a vengeance!

MARQ. (*to FRANCINE*) May I hope you will consent to complete the good work you have begun; you promised to reform, remodel me.

FRANC. But not to marry you in downright earnest; can't I reform you without that?

MARQ. No, I shall relapse in despair! and in proof, Thierry, if you don't persuade her to become your aunt, I'll disown you again directly. I'll *not* buy you a regiment, and I'll *not* give you *twice* five hundred louis on the day you are married.

THIER. *Twice* five hundred, and the regiment! Oh, my

dear uncle! my dear cousin! you must be my aunt, if only for my sake.

PRINCE. MERLU., *and* MAD. Cousin!

FRANC. Yes, Monseigneur, by his father's side. So I had a family interest in the reputation of the Marquis.

MERLU. But I am determined to see justice done to *my* cousin. And as the Marquis is not married, and I hold his promise, if your Royal Highness refuses to interfere, there is still the law.

PRINCE. Appeal to it, Sir. (*turns his back on him.*)

THIER. If you dare——

MARQ. And though it cost me half my fortune, if this lady will but consent.

MAD. "Lady!" Brush the flour out of your hair, child; I must have been blind not to have seen it before.

MERLU. Marry, and turn miller, Marquis! You'll gain a golden thumb by it, and the clapper will be useful to drown your wife's tongue.

FRANC. Thierry, send for the blanket.

*Exeunt* MADEMOISELLE *and* DEMERLUCHET, *hastily*, R.H.

MARQ. My sentence dearest Francine.

FRANC. Why, Monseigneur did me the honour to say, I was worthy the love of a Prince.

PRINCE. (*aside*) Hush! Traitress.

FRANC. I may, therefore, be justified in accepting that of a Marquis, some day, if he remain in the same mind, and I can make up my own to return it; for I wouldn't marry him without if he were—a miller.

PRINCE. Faith, he looks so much younger, one would suppose he had been to the mill already.

FRANC. He shall come to it every day to court Francine in face of the whole neighbourhood, as a penance for his pride. And to atone for his avarice, he shall realize the paradise *here* which I invented for him in Normandy. Ah! the wrinkles are returning, take care. I'll never marry a cross old curmudgeon, whatever I may say to a good humoured man of five-and-forty. To win my love, you must deserve that of all around you. It's soon done if you try heartily; and then—shall I have him? (*to AUDIENCE*) Only let me know it will please you, and nothing stops me!—nothing!

CURTAIN.



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